

## **IN THE CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

1. A package for retaining a needle-suture combination, the package comprising:
  - 5 a molded base portion;
  - a molded cover portion, the cover portion being integrally connected to the base portion via a hinge, wherein at least one of the base portion and the cover portion is configured and adapted to retain a suture of a needle-suture combination; and
  - a needle park disposed on at least one of the base portion and the cover portion,
  - 10 the needle park being configured and adapted to retain a needle of the needle-suture combination therein.
2. The package according to claim 1, wherein the hinge integrally interconnects the base portion with the cover portion.
- 15 3. The package according to claim 2, wherein the hinge is a living hinge.
4. The package according to claim 1, wherein the base portion and the cover portion are correspondingly shaped.
- 20 5. The package according to claim 4, wherein the base portion and the cover portion are ovular in shape.

6. The package according to claim 2, wherein at least one of the base portion and the cover portion includes at least one rail integrally formed therewith and defining a suture race around the circumference of the package.

5 7. The package according to claim 2, wherein at least one of the base portion and the cover portion includes at least one aperture formed therein for passage of the suture of the needle-suture combination therethrough.

8. The package according to claim 1, wherein the base portion and the cover  
10 portion are formed from plastic.

9. A package for retaining a needle-suture combination, the package comprising:

a base portion having:

15 a bottom wall;

an outer perimetral wall extending therearound;

a rail provided on the bottom wall and extending substantially  
therearound, the rail and the outer perimetral wall defining a race therebetween; and

an aperture formed in the bottom wall for passage of a suture retained in  
20 the suture race from the package; and

a cover connected to the base portion via a hinge.

10. The package of claim 9, wherein the hinge is a living hinge.

11. The package of claim 9, the rail is provided with at least one opening formed along the length thereof.
- 5 12. The package of claim 9, wherein the outer perimeteral wall includes at least one tab extending therefrom and configured and dimensioned to selectively engage an edge of the cover.
- 10 13. The package of claim 11, further including a suture wound around the rail and within the suture race, the suture including a distal end extending through the at least one opening in the rail and through the aperture in the bottom wall.
14. The package of claim 9, wherein the package is formed of plastic.
- 15 15. The package of claim 9, further including a lubricious material provided in the suture race.
16. The package of claim 9, further includes at least one needle park formed in the bottom wall of the base portion, the needle park being configured and adapted to  
20 retain a needle therein.
17. A method of loading a package for retaining a needle-suture combination, the method including the steps of:

providing a package for retaining a needle-suture combination, the package including:

a molded base portion having a hinge-side edge and a free edge;

5 a molded cover portion having a hinge-side edge and a free edge, the cover portion being integrally connected to the base portion along the hinge-side edges; and

a needle park disposed on at least one of the base portion and the cover portion, the needle park being configured and adapted to retain a needle of the needle-suture combination therein;

10 loading the package with a suture of the needle-suture combination; and approximating the free edges of the base portion and the cover portion toward one another.

18. The method according to claim 17, wherein the free ends of the base  
15 portion and the cover portion are snappingly engagable with one another.